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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 120832

LIMDIS

SUBJECT: STAFF DEL PINCUS AND PAUL

REFS: A. BANGKOK 9720

B. STATE 120353

1. IN FURTHER RESPONSE TO REF A, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT JAN. 29, 1968 LETTER TO SENATOR FULBRIGHT, MENTIONED IN REF B, INCLUDED BY REFERENCE OUR CONFIDENTIAL DECEMBER 5, 1967 LETTER TO HIM. LATTER WAS RESPONSE TO HIS NOVEMBER 20, 1967 INQUIRY REGARDING THE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO BE GIVEN THAILAND IN CONNECTION WITH THE SENDING OF ADDITIONAL THAILAND TROOPS IN VIET-NAM. OUR REPLY STATED: "THERE IS NO INCREASE IN ECONOMIC AID INVOLVED, AND NO FORMAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT COVERING INCREMENTAL MILITARY AID. HOWEVER, AMBASSADOR UNGER HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO MAKE CERTAIN COMMITMENTS TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT REGARDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH ARE SUMMARIZED IN THE ENCLOSED CLASSIFIED MEMORANDUM."

2. FOLLOWING INTRODUCTORY PARAGREPH NOTING RTG NOVEMBER 13, 1967 ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECISION TO SEND A DIVISION OF VOLUNTEERS TO REINFORCE ITS CONTINGENT IN VIET-NAM AND MENTIONING MAJOR CONTRIBUTION OF THAI BASES TO AIR WAR, MEMORANDUM CONTINUES AS BELOW.

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"3. IN THE AUTUMN OF 1966, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SUGGESTED IN CONTACTS WITH THAI LEADERS THAT THEY CONSIDER MAKING A TROOP CONTRIBUTION TO THE VIET-NAM WAR. THE MATTER WAS FOLLOWED UP IN DECEMBER, AND EARLY THIS YEAR (1967) THE THAI AGREED TO SEND A COMBAT FORCE TO VIET-NAM. A CALL FOR A THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS PRODUCED SOME 40,000 RESPONSES, AND A 2,200-MAN INFANTRY REGIMENT WAS FORMED FROM AMONG THESE VOLUNTEERS AND DISPATCHED TO VIET-NAM IN SEPTEMBER. IN ADDITION, THE THAI HAVE APPROXIMATELY 400 MEN IN SMALL AIR FORCE AND NAVY UNITS STATIONED IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

"4. THE NEW DIVISION IS EXPECTED TO CONSIST OF ABOUT 11,000 MEN, DIVIDED INTO TWO BRIGADE FORCES, THE FIRST TO BE SENT TO VIET-NAM NEXT SUMMER AND THE SECOND EARLY IN 1969. THE PRECISE COMPOSITION OF THE BRIGADE FORCES IS BEING WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE THAI ARMY AND MACV/MACV. THE FIRST INCREMENT OF TROOPS IS TO BEGIN TRAINING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND WILL PROBABLY DEPLOY TO VIET-NAM NEXT SUMMER (1968).

"5. SINCE 1950, THE UNITED STATES HAS PROVIDED MATERIAL AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE TO THE THAI FORCES. THE FY 1968 MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THAILAND HAD BEEN PROPOSED FOR DOLS 60 MILLION. WE NOW HAVE AGREED TO INCREASE THIS TO DOLS 75 MILLION AND TO PLAN AGAINST A SIMILAR AMOUNT FOR FY 1969. THIS IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THAI FORCES REMAINING IN THAILAND WITH IMPROVED FIRE-POWER, MOBILITY AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY, SO THAT THAI INTERNAL SECURITY WILL NOT BE DEGRADED BY THE ADDITIONAL DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS TO VIET-NAM.

6. " AS IN THE CASE OF THE EARLIER THAI DEPLOYMENT AND WITH SOME OTHER TROOP CONTRIBUTIONS, THE U.S. HAS AGREED TO UNDERWRITE THE COSTS OF TRAINING, EQUIPPING, AND MAINTAINING THE NEW UNIT. THE THAI WILL CONTINUE TO PAY THE BASE PAY AND ALLOWANCES OF THESE FORCES AND THE U.S. BEAR THE COSTS OF OVERSEAS ALLOWANCES.

7. " IN ADDITION, IN RESPONSE TO A STRONG THAI FEELING THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE ADDITIONAL DIVISION INCREASES THE

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LIKELIHOOD OF AN AIR ATTACK, WE WILL FURNISH THE THAI  
WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF HAWK MISSILES FOR AIR DEFENSE OF  
BANGKOK. THAI CONCERN REGARDING THE INADEQUACY OF THAI  
AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY DATES BACK TO 1965 AND HAS BEEN  
RAISED FREQUENTLY DURING THE INTERIM WITH U.S. OFFICIALS."  
ROGERS

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